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**Testimony for the
Government Administration and Elections Committee
Jennifer Widness, President
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Friday, February 15, 2019**

On behalf of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), I am submitting testimony on **SB 266, AN ACT REQUIRING POLLING PLACES AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

CCIC's member institutions actively support and encourage the civic engagement of our students. They often host debates, town hall forums, voter registration drives and inform students from out-of-state how to obtain absentee ballots.

However, we are concerned that this bill as drafted requires that a municipality create a separate voting district containing an institution of higher education with more than 3,000 full-time students and the town must provide a polling place at, or not more than five hundred feet from, such institution.

Requiring that a polling place be located on a college campus is problematic.

In some instances, the institutions may not be able to provide an appropriate venue that is easily accessible to the general public for an entire day, particularly mid-semester when classes and other activities are taking place. Visitor parking can be very limited. The campuses can also be difficult to navigate. For all of these reasons, requiring an institution to host a polling place may in fact discourage civic engagement for members of the general public assigned to vote at that institution.

CCIC's member institutions would be more than willing to voluntarily work with the communities in which they are located in to have a polling place on campus if it's manageable and appropriate but, it should not be mandated.